

# Investigation of MONE Preschool Program for 36-72 Months Old Children (2006) according to Children Rights\*

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## Abstract

In Turkey, the preschoolers are being schooled under the guidelines of MONE (Ministry of National Education) Preschool Program for 36-72 Months Old Children (2006). The aim of this research is to investigate how children's rights are involved in this program. In this qualitative research based on document analysis, program book and Teacher Guide were analyzed using content analysis method. Frequency of children right categories (survival, development, protection, participation) in each sentence is coded and presented in tables and graphics. Findings indicate that development and participation rights take part in the program mostly and the large part of development rights is right to a quality public education. Protection rights are merely mentioned. Although there are a few findings that conflict with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is clear that the program is not based on the convention. Restructuring is needed for upbringing children with human right culture.

## Key Words

Children Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, MONE Preschool Program.

Human rights are the rights to which people are entitled simply because they are human beings. According to Kuçuradi (2007), human beings are entitled to some rights just by being human beings and that human rights is the idea that human beings should be treated in a way to help actualize their structural opportunities.

Human rights are based on the idea that every individual are born free and as equals in dignity. Realization and protection of these rights are ensured by international law, created by interstate organizations (Gündem Çocuk Derneği, 2009).

Children have children's rights, in addition to hu-

man rights because they need human rights tailored into their special needs and vulnerabilities (Bedard, 1996). The need for special treatment of children has been stated in Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959. On the 20th November 1989 United Nations ratified the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) as a means to guarantee children's rights (UNICEF, 2009).

CRC is a document of consensus. The standards of CRC were negotiated by governments, non-governmental organizations and people of different professions over a 10-year period. It aims to balance protection and freedom of the child and cultural and universal values.

41 of the 54 articles of the convention are on creating opportunities for children to live under best conditions possible and to actualize themselves. The rest 13 articles are about how this convention is to be implemented; how the procedures shall take place and how they shall be reported.

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CRC, which is ratified by 193 countries except Somalia and USA, is the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in the history. It is legally binding and has a monitoring mechanism. According to this, States parties have to submit regular reports on the status of children's rights in their countries to The Committee on the Rights of the Child, an internationally elected body of independent experts. The Committee reviews and comments on these reports and encourages States to take special measures and to form special institutions for the promotion and protection of children's rights (UNICEF, 2011).

CRC provides a framework for looking at the needs of children through the perspective of children's rights. Thus, it is not a mere list of rights but a catalogue of domains in which States should recognize their obligations towards children and it provides guideliness for all actors (Qudenhoven & Wazir, 2006).

Republic of Turkey, by signing the convention, has accepted to provide every child in the country with the rights indicated in the convention without any exceptions and makes the rights of the child widely known not only by adults but also by children themselves. Article no. 90 of the constitution too, indicates that under the conditions in which national law contradicts convention's articles about enacted fundamental rights and freedoms, principles of the convention will be taken into consideration.

In recent years some studies being done in Turkey to raise awareness about children rights. But most of these studies have been for primary and secondary school students. However, basic habits are gained at preschool years. Researches show that, the children who supported in this period have more developmental benefits and early childhood is a critical period for brain, social and personal development (Atay, 2009). So, education must begin in early childhood to create a human right culture in the society.

#### **Umbrella Rights (General Principles of CRC)**

Committee on the Rights of the Child highlights 4 articles in an effort to establish children's rights and ensure convention's implementation. These four fundamental articles are: 2 (non-discrimination obligation), 3 (best interest of the child), 6 (right to life, survival and development) ve 12 (Right of participation).

**Right to Life, Survival and Development:** According to the article 6 of the convention: "Every child has the inherent right to life. The State shall ensure the life and development of the child." Right to life is the fundamental right that ensures other rights and freedoms. All other rights are invalid unless this particular right is secured. Every document on human rights secures right to life and recognizes it as "inalienable". Right to life secures an individual's physical and psychological wholeness and protects him/her from outside factors that may disturb his/her presence (Gündem Çocuk Derneği, 2009). Thus, any effort to save the life of an individual shall be accompanied by efforts of enhancing living standards (Akyüz, 2010).

**Non-Discrimination Obligation:** Non-discrimination principle is a general principle of all human rights provisions and is part of every international human rights instrument. This obligation requires that States parties actively identify individual children and groups of children whose rights may require special measures (Zermatten, 2010). Addressing discrimination may require changes in legislation, administration and resource allocation, as well as educational measures to change attitudes (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2003).

**Best Interest of the Child:** Whenever a decision is to be taken that will affect a child, the decision-making process must carefully consider the possible impacts of the decision on the child/children concerned. States parties have an obligation to put in place mechanisms that will facilitate consideration of the best interests of the child, and must provide legislative measures to ensure that those with the authority to make decisions regarding children must consider the "best interests" rule as a matter of procedure (Zermatten, 2010).

**Right to Participation:** The 12th article of the CRC deals with legal and social statuses of the children which are not fully autonomous although they are the owners of the rights. The article ensures that every child with the ability has freedom of expression about every issue affecting the life of children and consideration of her/his ideas in relation to the age and level of maturity (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).

Committee on the Rights of Children in its 12th general comment indicates that the article 12 shall be implemented from the very early ages on, and emphasizes that even very small children who are not able to express themselves yet are capable of forming his/her own perspective. The child does

not need to know every aspects of the situation affecting his/her life in order to freely express itself. It is enough for the child to have sufficient perspective to appropriately express his/her ideas. Every required measure shall be taken to help disadvantaged children to better express themselves.

Committee also states that children shall be treated as active participants in the education programs, even in early childhood; children and parents shall actively participate in the planning of the curriculums and school schedules; and that freedom of expression is not an obligation but a choice of the child and thus the child may choose to not to use this right.

### **The Child's Evolving Capacity**

The 5th article of the convention brings out two concepts of vital importance: responsibilities of parents and a child's evolving abilities. The article also states that the rights shall be used only by the child itself and that the child is the subject of the rights (Hodgkin & Newell, 2007).

The convention recognizes the fact that children's developments may differ in accordance with conditions and environment that they live in. Furthermore, different rights can induce development of different abilities. Thus, what parents should do is to guide their children to use their rights effectively (Lansdown, 2005). So, families shall be educated about child development and their roles and responsibilities in the process. Through such programs family members will learn that they need to respect each other. Family members' acknowledgement of the rights of the child will enhance the awareness of all rights of the family including parents' rights (Hodgkin & Newell, 2002).

### **Aims of the Education According to CRC (General Comment No: 1)**

The 1st General Comment published by Committee in the year 2001 is on the aim of education indicated in the article 29. Right to education is every child's right, and education should spread human rights and provide children with life skills, self-confidence, self-respect and skills to be able to benefit from all human rights. In other words, the right of the child is not just a matter of accessibility, but a matter of understanding the content. Yet the Committee realizes that national and international educational programs are just used as make up and 29th article is overlooked.

The curriculum shall be directly related to social, cultural, environmental and financial conditions the child lives in, as well as present and future needs of the child, and should take the evolving capacities of the child into consideration. Methods of instruction shall be shaped according to different needs of children in with different dispositions. Education shall aim at providing every child with basic life skills. Basic life skills are; to be able to make sound decisions, to be able to solve problems without violence, to be able to progress in life by himself, to be able to adapt a healthy life style and positive social relations, to be able to realize his/her responsibilities, to be able to think critically, to have creative talents.

Education should also flourish the child's respect for natural environment. For this, education shall relate subjects of environment and sustainable development with socioeconomical, sociocultural and demographical subjects. Education in this subject shall take both national and international problems into consideration, and children should actively participate in both local and environmental projects.

Effective establishment of article 29 requires present curriculum to be reviewed and redesigned according to specific requirements of the education; and the present course books, materials and utilized technologies to be re-evaluated. It will not be sufficient to insert the aims and values of the article into the present system. In order the curriculum to be internalized, individuals expected to be transferring these values to the students shall themselves be persuaded. Hence, pre-service and in-service training programs for establishment of article 29, are of vital importance for teachers, education managers, and every individual involved in child education (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2001).

### **Implementing Children Rights in Early Childhood (General Comment: 7)**

Reports presented to UN by Ratifying States have been limited to statistics of birth and death rates and health services, which urged CRC to present a General Comment on the condition in the year 2004. The aim of this comment was to emphasize the fact that young children too have rights according to the convention, and that early childhood is a critical period for these rights to be implemented. The 7th General Comment may be summarized as:

*Young children shall be provided with special measures of protection. They use their rights in accordance with their evolving capacities. Ratifying states shall recognize children as subjects of rights and shall make required revisions, policies and programs for implementation of these rights.*

The traditional perspective viewing childhood as the process through which an immature individual is evolving and socializing into adulthood should be changed. Young children are active participants of the society with their own sensitivities, interests and perspectives. Young children require physical and emotional care, sound guiding and safe places to fulfill their desires to play social games, to discover, and to learn.

Every young child, especially the disadvantaged, shall be able to access required services including care, health and education programs.

Committee, within the article about right to life and maximum survival and development, emphasizes that children should be involved in the efforts to create conditions for young children where they may access good nutrition and healthy living.

The article on *non-discrimination* underlines the fact that children are at risk of discrimination as they are dependent to other people. It is indicated that discrimination may show itself in malnutrition, insufficient care, limited opportunity to play, learn and schooling or as prevention of the child's freedom of expression.

When it comes to *best interests of the child*, as children are not yet matured, they depend on the individual or institutions representing their caregivers about the decisions, which will directly affect them. Perspectives and evolving capacities of the children shall be taken into consideration in the process of decision-making. In every decision on such subjects as care, health, education of the child, caregivers, parents, professionals and other responsible individuals shall take best interests of the child into consideration.

*According to the principle of respect for views of the child, expressed ideas of even the youngest children shall be respected with respect to their age and level of maturity. Implementation of right for opportunity to participate is only possible when adults adapt a child-centered perspective, when they listen to the children, and when they respect children's dignity and personal perspectives. Adults shall also balance their own expectations and interests, preferred method of communication, and level of under-*

standing of the young child and shall present required patience and creativity to achieve this balanced state.

Committee states that parents and caregivers shall be consulted and involved in the planning of the services about early childhood.

Services should be designed with respect to age and conditions of the young children, and authorized individuals should have the required training about this age group. People working in this field, should have an up to date and practical understanding about child development and rights of the child, and should adapt child centered curriculum and pedagogical methods.

On the *right to rest, leisure and play*, committee states that the article 31 that secures the child's right to participate in activities of rest, leisure and play, as well as cultural and artistic life is being overlooked and not being implemented effectively.

Play is one of the most important characteristics of early childhood. Whether played alone or with friends, games provide children with realization and enhancement of their skills. Creative games and experiments are widely accepted to be priceless. Unfortunately, implementation of right to rest, leisure and play is being hindered under many circumstances because of the absence of safe, supporting, stimulating and stress free child-centered spaces in which children may come together to play and discover. Children's right to have playgrounds is at risk in the city life. Domestic chores (especially for girls) and competitive school environments too, limit children's right to play. Thus, the Committee warns ratifying states to take more measures for the implementation of right to rest, leisure and play.

Article number 17 on modern communication technologies and early childhood, highlights the possible contributions of mass media for implementation of the rights of the child. *Early childhood is a market for publishers and media producers. Individuals working in these fields should prepare and spread educative and beneficial materials appropriate for children's development and interests* (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005).

#### **Human Rights in Early Childhood / Education on the Rights of the Child**

Education on the rights of the child is an education to raise sensitivity towards children's rights, starting by introducing CRC in an environment in which the rights of the children are implemented

and respected. The goal of the children rights education is to ornament the children with fundamental information, behavior and abilities to create a democratic society respectful to human rights. As it will be easier for the child to understand children's rights and to shape its life accordingly than to understand human rights in general, human rights education should start with children's rights education for young children (Özdemir Uluç, 2008).

Childhood is the ideal time to begin to learn human rights (Flowers, 2010). Children gain basic habits at preschool years and this important time cannot be seen just as a preparation for school or citizenship (Arnold, 2004), but also for the foundation for their place in society as protectors of children's and human rights. They will retain impressions gained from images and objects which are used during children rights education, and these will help to prevent them from adapting negative stereotypes and prejudices that they already encounter at their young age (Hand, 2009).

The fundamental bases for the culture of human rights are to value self and others, to recognize human rights in everyday life, to understand one's own basic rights, to acquire attitudes to address conflicts in non-violent ways, to appreciate and respect differences and to develop children's confidence in their ability to take action to defend and promote human rights (Flowers, 2010).

Yet, the important thing is that concepts like tolerance and respect for differences are expected to be understood correctly and transferred to the child. Kuçuradi (2007), finds the approach that describes tolerance as being respectful to other people's ideas that are different than ours problematic. Because, this description expects us to respect something we think bad or incorrect. What is expected from a tolerating person to do, on the other hand, is not to violate rights of the person who thinks differently, in other words, to respect human beings. The subject of the respect is the human being, not ideas.

Thus, education on respect for differences is expected to be against discriminations. For this, the educational system is expected to discover differences within the institution, and then within the society, and to represent the diversity in the society within the institution. This way, differences will be tolerable for children. Formation of any prejudices is expected to be prevented (KEDEV, 2006).

Human rights education is expected to awaken the awareness of human identity (Kuçuradi, 2007). To make children understand that human beings are

precious will make them understand that others are as priceless as themselves (Kuçuradi, 2009). The appreciation of the widely known golden rule encountered in every culture as a moral motto (One should not treat others in ways that one would not like to be treated) prevents the fulfillment of the goals of human rights education. If this phrase was changed to; "I am a human being, as I respect human beings I do/not do this" the moral values behind the phrase would change. The important thing is the awakening of being a human being rather than the ego-centric perspective scared of being in the same situation with the other (Kuçuradi, 2006).

Brett, Gaillard, and Salema (2009), indicate that democratic citizenship and human rights education can only be achieved by the expertise of teachers. Bedard (1996) dwells on treating children with dignity and acknowledge them as persons with their own rights to affect them positively.

There is a hidden curriculum in the messages transmitted by the way teachers and students behave towards each other. Children cannot be taught to be respectful for rights unless members of the school community practice what is preached (Hodgkin & Newell, 2007).

*The Child's Rights in a Preschool Setting* published by Canadian Children's Care Federation states how the rights of the child will be included in the preschools with a list of 4 titles (Emotional, Social, Intellectual and Physical Rights) (Canadian Child Care Federation, 2010). Lydiard Millicent Preschool, on the other hand, prepared a Children's Rights and Entitlements Policy for all the personnel in the institution to sign, and the policy is being revised every year. The two paged document presents a to-do-list for enhancement of the rights of the preschool children (Lydiard Millicent Preschool, 2011).

It is important to create an environment appropriate for children's rights in schools. The second important thing is to determine the method in educating children about their rights. Hand (2009), indicates that even three year old children are able to associate difficult concepts, and that children can make an empathy and relation between their own lives and others' lives if they are introduced to the rights from their own setting, slowly widening it to enclose others' cultures. Qvarsel (2005), indicates that when told about educational requirements of young children, many people think about Professional guidance, whereas children are not given the opportunity to use their own methods in achieving

interesting environmental conditions and interests. Rather than creating a model by relying on theories of adults and educating children with Professional guidance, children need to be given the opportunity to learn by themselves. Garlake and Pocock (2000), indicate the importance of art in the rights of the child education. Because art is an ideal way for the children to express their ideas, emotions and values. Another method for awakening their own rights is to benefit from children's literature. Books written in accordance with the convention will raise children's awareness about their own rights (Karaman Kepenekçi & Aslan, 2011).

### **The Condition in Turkey**

The convention that came into effect in the year 1990 and accepted by Turkey in the September of the same year, was acknowledged by Turkish Great National Assembly to be published on the Official Gazette in the year 1995. Although Republic of Turkey has accepted to provide every child in the country with the rights indicated in the convention without any exceptions and make the rights of the child widely known by society, recent research shows that CRC is not taken into consideration sufficiently. Gündoğdu's (2004) dissertation on the condition of democracy and human rights in primary education shows that democracy is a reality that should be implemented by school societies in accordance with basic strategies; that there are fundamental differences between what is learned at school and at home; that education on democracy and human rights should start in early childhood; that democracy and human rights education shall be supported by character education programs. In Özdemir Uluç's (2008) dissertation on the rights of the child in social, historical and cultural lessons in Primary School Program shows that acquisitions on rights of the child are scientifically incoherent and that programs' anticipated vision is not reflected onto the acquisitions. Uluç finds out that the most stressed right is right to development; next is right to participate while the least stressed right is the right to protection. Karaman Kepenekçi and Aslan's (2011) research on the contents of preschool children books in relation to the rights of the child shows that the most encountered rights that are referred to are right to life and development, while the rights to protection and participation are the least encountered. Köse's (2009), research on teachers understanding of democracy through the process of instruction shows that preschool teachers exhibit many negative behaviours concerning

democracy and implementing physical and emotional violence. Şahin's (2011) research shows that teacher candidates shall go through an awareness training on negligence and exploitation of children, and that teachers' trainings should have detailed lessons in order them to be able to prevent negligence and exploitation. Akman and Ertürk's (2011) research shows that preschool teachers do not plan lessons on rights and that they are inadequate in teaching the rights. Çeltikçi (2011), repeated his original research project of the year 2000 on school discipline by applying to thoughts of teachers and students in the year 2010 in the same region with the same method. The results show that: children are still not recognized as an individual ornamented with civil rights; just like 10 years ago, students are not trusted neither at home nor at school; violence against children has been escalated within the 10 years; at the end of 10 years, no improvement have been seen about understanding and accepting the rights of the child and shaping the understanding of education.

In Turkey, education of the preschool children are designed according to the "Preschool Education Program for 36-72 months old" redesigned by the ministry of education in the year 2006. Thus, it is important to explore the content of the program with respect to rights of the children.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to assess the efficiency of Preschool Education Program for 36-72 Months-Old" with respect to educating individuals aware of the rights of children, and to suggest alterations in the program where appropriate. Sub-purposes of the research are as below:

How issues of

1. Rights to life,
2. Rights to develop,
3. Rights to protection,
4. Rights to participation appear in the program.

### **Method**

#### **Research Model**

This is a qualitative research based on document analysis. Content analysis on Ministry of Education's "Preschool Education Program for 36-72 Months-Old (2006)" was made with reference to different categories of rights of the child. Acquired data was

**Table 1.***Categories and Sub-categories of the Rights of the Child as used in the Coding (Özdemir Uluç, 2008)*

Categories	Sub Categories
Category 1: Right to life	<p><b>1a. Article 4/6:</b> States Parties' obligation of taking measure for the implementation of the rights and protection of rights to life, survive and develop.</p> <p><b>1b. Article 9:</b> Right to not be separated from parents unless it is required for the best interest of the child.</p> <p><b>1c. Article 18/27:</b> Responsibilities and right to have appropriate living standards of the parents and caregivers.</p> <p><b>1d. Article 24:</b> Right to access medical services and protection of health</p> <p><b>1e. Article 26:</b> Right to benefit from social security</p> <p><b>1f Article 31:</b> the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities</p>
Category 2: Right to development	<p><b>2a. Article 5:</b> States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and caregivers (Parental guidance and development of child's skills)</p> <p><b>2b Article 7:</b> Protection of the child's rights to be registered immediately after birth, to a name, to acquire nationality and to know and be cared for by his or her parents.</p> <p><b>2c Article 8:</b> Right of the child to preserve his or her identity</p> <p><b>2d. Article 10:</b> Family reunification shall be made easy</p> <p><b>2e Article 23:</b> Right of the disabled child to special care</p> <p><b>2f. Article 28-29:</b> Right of the child for quality education</p>
Category 3: Rights to protection	<p><b>3a. Article 2:</b> Prohibition of discrimination</p> <p><b>3b. Article 11:</b> Protection against illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.</p> <p><b>3c. Article 19:</b> Protection against any kind of violence</p> <p><b>3d. Article 20/21:</b> Protection of children without mother or father and monitoring of the adoption process</p> <p><b>3e. Article 22:</b> Protection of refugee children</p> <p><b>3f. Article 32:</b> Protection against financial exploitation</p> <p><b>3g. Article 33:</b> Protection against drug addiction</p> <p><b>3h. Article 34:</b> Protection against sexual exploitation</p> <p><b>3i. Article 35:</b> Protection against child trafficking</p> <p><b>3j. Article 36:</b> Protection against all other kinds of exploitation</p> <p><b>3k. Article 37:</b> Protection against torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment</p> <p><b>3l. Article 38:</b> Protection against war and armed conflict</p> <p><b>3m. Article 39:</b> Reintroduction of child victims to the society</p> <p><b>3n. Article 40:</b> Approaches of the penal law towards children</p>
Category 4: Rights to participation	<p><b>4a. Article 3:</b> Best interest of the child</p> <p><b>4b. Article 12:</b> Right to freedom of expression about every subject related to itself, and right to be listened to</p> <p><b>4c. Article 13:</b> Right to freedom of expression</p> <p><b>4d. Article 14:</b> Freedom of thought, conscience and religion</p> <p><b>4e. Article 15:</b> The rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly</p> <p><b>4f. Article 16:</b> Respect for child's privacy</p> <p><b>4g. Article 17:</b> Freedom of accession mass media and other sources of information</p>

then interpreted in an effort to identify the condition of the rights of the child within the program.

#### Data Sources Used in the Research

Ministry of Education's Book of Preschool Education Teacher's Guide (2006b) was used as the data source in order to identify the condition of rights of the child within the preschool education program.

#### Collection and Analysis of the Data

In the beginning of the research, present researches and articles about the subject have been studied. In

order to be able to make a content analysis in accordance with categories of rights of the child; Program Book, Teacher's Guide, CRC, General Comments of UN Committee on Rights of the Child, UN Guide for Periodic Reports, Implementation Handbook For The Convention On The Rights Of The Child, Turkey's National Development Reports on Rights of the Child and CRC's easy texts for children have been extendedly investigated.

Sections of the Program Book of Preschool Education and Teacher's Guide have been analyzed by content analysis method. Course books on any field to be analyzed, shall go through a thorough content analysis according to the purpose of the research

**Table 2.**  
*Sample Coding Table*

Categories	Section 1	Sections of the program						f	%
		Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6	Section 7		
Category 1	x1=a1+b1+c1							x1+	x1+/A1+
1a.	a1							a1+	a1+/x1+
1b.	b1							b1+	b1+/x1+
1c.	c1							c1+	c1+/x1+
...									
Category 2	y1=d1+e1							y1+	y1+/A1+
2a.	d1							d1+	d1+/y1+
2b.	e1							e1+	e1+/y1+
...									
Category 3	z1=f1+g1							z1+	z1+/A1+
3a.	f1							f1+	f1+/z1+
3b.	g1							g1+	g1+/z1+
...									
Category 4	t1=h1+i1							t1+	t1+/A1+
4a.	h1							h1+	h1+/t1+
4b.	i1							i1+	i1+/t1+
...									
TOTAL	A1=x1+y1+z1+t1							A1+	100

as these books will be used as data resource. For this analysis, they have suggested Bailey (1982)'s 4-phase study.

**Sample Selection from the Related Data:** As the program was explored as a whole in the research, no sampling was made, but rather target universe has been studied.

"Contents", "foreword", "appendix" and sections II, IV and VI of books which is about professional information; Children's Developmental Characteristics, Annual Plans and Acquisition Evaluation Sheet which are parallel to List of Goals and Acquisitions have been excluded from the research. All sections except the aforementioned have been explored and coded.

**Categories:** Özdemir Uluç's (2008) categories of the rights of the child (Table 1) in her dissertation titled *The Rights of the Child in Primary School Programs* have been used for the coding by permission of her. This is for providing researchers who want to explore how children's rights are treated in preschool and Primary School Programs with reports of similar format so to enable holistic evaluation.

**Determination of Unit of Analysis:** Unit of analysis is the sentence and frequency of usage of categories and sub categories have been sought for in each sentence for the coding, and all direct and indirect narrations were taken into consideration. In order for the perspective of the researcher to

be understood, such examples as the following are given: For the children to be able to freely express themselves they need to have knowledge, to have knowledge they need to create information, to create information they need to be able to explore, experiment and discover. Thus, the phrases, which not only motivates children to freely express themselves but also guides them towards making discoveries have been coded within the context of 4c. Article 13: Right to freedom of expression. We cannot expect preschoolers to start an association. Yet, within the scope of 4e. Article 15: the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly, the program has been explored to find out whether it bears motivating phrases for children to freely get together and initiate an action. Only one of the similar phrases under similar titles has been included in the coding. So, any fallacious repetition was avoided.

**Numerization:** Phrases that are convenient for children's rights have been given "1", while phrases that are not convenient for children's rights have been given "-1". As the unfavorable treatment of the right has been encountered with only in the daily plans and activity samples in the Teacher's Guide, positive treatment of the rights have been counted and frequency of reference to the rights of the child categories and findings for each category have been exhibited in Table 2. Frequency and

percentage of each category and sub category have been presented in the tables. Below formulas have been used for the process:

$$\text{Category \%} = (\text{Sum of frequencies of sub categories} / \text{sum of frequencies of all categories}) \times 100$$

$$\text{Sub Category \%} = (\text{Frequency of the sub categories} / \text{sum of frequencies of sub categories in the related category}) \times 100$$

No frequency detections have been made for phrases with unfavorable treatment of the rights of the child, although all of these phrases have been elaborately described under the related categories.

### Reliability

Analysis was made by the researcher, although the sections on *goals and acquisitions* have been coded by a children's development expert who also is a member of an NGO working on the rights of the child. Codings of both the researcher and the expert exhibited similarity in 98 of the 120 acquisitions except some of psychomotor, cognitive and language acquisitions (The reason why these acquisitions have not been coded is explained below) and codings exhibited 81, 67% coherence. In face-to-face meetings, the expert and the researcher have agreed about 16 of the 22 acquisitions that have been coded under different sub categories so that the 95% coherence has been achieved. For the research to be reliable there should be at least 70% coherence between coding individuals (Hall & Houten, 1983). Thus, it is believed that categories of the rights of the child are thought to be reliably evaluated.

When psychomotor acquisitions supporting physical coordination, muscle development, physical balance; cognitive acquisitions such as concentration, matching, grouping and counting; and language acquisitions as differentiating sounds and correct usage of her/his own voice are coded because they are in relation with the principle Article 29(1), subparagraph a of the convention: The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential"; 2f: Article 28-29: Right to quality education becomes more frequent. This, in turn, causes other categories of rights in the program to decrease in percentage. Özdemir Uluç (2008) also mentions this condition in the "Instructions for the Coding to be used for Reliability" section of his aforementioned dissertation. In coding 2f, Uluç emphasizes those sub-paragraphs of 29(1) other than (a) should be focused on more. Acquisitions within the enclosure of 29(1). (a) have not been included in the coding as an integrity has been achieved be-

tween both researches. Yet, as the expert pointed out too, when most of the acquisitions about psychomotor and cognitive areas are not coded we encounter a problem: "The program would not have had a content supporting physical and cognitive developments of the children if it did not include these acquisitions. This, on the other hand, would have been evaluated as a factor preventing children from accessing quality education."

The researcher considered the warning, and created a table (Table 3) to show each element that make up subparagraphs of the article 29(1), and to analyze *goals and acquisitions* separately rather than coding phrases of acquisition in the article. The section of goals and acquisitions is one of the many sections of the program, yet, it is an important section as it shows the anticipated acquisitions of the children. Thus, it will be beneficial to examine this part separately.

Table 3.

*29 Elements that make up the subparagraphs of the article*

Elements	a subparagraph: Development
2f-a1.	Development of personality
2f-a2	Development of talents
2f-a3	Development of cognitive abilities
2f-a4	Development of physical abilities
	b subparagraph: Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
2f-b	Development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
	c subparagraph: Respect for national values and different civilizations
2f-c1	Development of respect for the child's parents
	Development of child's respect towards own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living
2f-c2	Development of child's respect towards civilizations other than his own.
2f-c3	d subparagraph: Taking responsibilities in social life
2f-d1	Spirit of peace
2f-d2	Gender equality
2f-d3	Tolerance, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin
2f-d4	Preparation of the child for a responsible life in a free society
	e subparagraph: Respecting the environment
2f-e	Development of child's respect towards the environment

This analysis has been made in the light of Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Below are the explanations of subparagraph of article 29(1) to present an example:

**29 (1) (a):** “The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”, the article emphasizes that “talents” of the child shall be supported too, as well as mental and physical abilities.

- Artistic, sportive, professional talents are within the scope of this paragraph.
- “Physical abilities” on the other hand, includes such coordinate movement abilities as swimming, gym, biking and the ability to control the ball.
- What is meant by “development of personality” is the child’s acquisition of gentle and merciful behaviours.

#### External and Internal Validity

For any qualitative research, external validity is the transferability of the conclusions to the similar groups or situations, while the internal validity is about sufficiency of the process in uncovering the reality. In the research, Özdemir Uluç's (2008) process in uncovering the reality with acknowledged sufficiency has been followed, and thus the internal validity of the research has been achieved.

The program has been explored as a whole without sampling. The method has been explained in detailed as to support comparisons. The reader has been informed in a detailed way about every phase of the research in a way that s/he can easily test the findings. So the external validity of the research has been established.

#### Findings and Comments

MONE Preschool Program for 36-72 Months Old Children (2006) has been conducted within the scope of Project for Supporting Primary Education by the Ministry of Education with the intention of children’s acquisition of awareness of human rights, democracy and different cultures. The goal of the program is to support children’s psychomotor, socio-emotional, language and cognitive developments, and to provide them with self-care skills and to ensure that they are ready for primary education.

The program is in accord with the “Theory of Multiple Intelligences” with a holistic perspective and adapts a spiral approach towards education.

The program anticipates children’s acquisition of such skills related to children rights as problem solving communication, reasoning, taking responsibility, research, environmental awareness and creativity. It is of vital importance with respect to the rights of the child that children will acquire these abilities through play centered activities, active participation, and self-shaping of the knowledge.

In the explanation of the basic features of the program below elements are highlighted;

- Importance of taking developmental features, interests and needs, personal dispositions and differences of the child into consideration in the creation of the activities,
- As the program is child centered, children should be given the opportunity to plan, do, organize, question, research, discuss and produce things.
- That to provide children with pre-prepared environments and to continuously guide them will contradict the perspective of the program,
- That the teacher should adapt the child-centered perspective also in the process of preparing the plans,
- That the program seeks to transform differences within the classroom into advantages,
- That the important thing is to provide children with basic behavioral and habitual dispositions,
- As the program is flexible it can be suited for the children who requires special needs with some alterations,
- That creativity is of the foreground,
- That the environment should safely provide children with the opportunity to gain experience and move around freely,
- That problem solving and play are the fundamental activities, and to this purpose, the child should be given the choice and that the activities should be planned with a play-centered perspective,
- That the teacher should be objective in the process of evaluation; should not compare children with each other; and should evaluate children with a realistic expectations,
- That the celebration of special days should not turn out to be demonstrations.

**Table 4.**

29. Elements of the subparagraphs of the article as they appear on the acquisitions of MONE (2006) Preschool Program for 36-72 Months Old Children

Elements	Subparagraphs	Total	
		f	%
	Subparagraph a: Development	<b>210</b>	<b>79,5</b>
2f-a1.	Development of the personality	37	17,6
2f-a2	Development of the talents	14	6,7
2f-a3	Development of the cognivite abilities	113	53,8
2f-a4	Development of physical abilities	46	21,9
	subparagraph b: Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms	<b>1</b>	<b>0,4</b>
2f-b	Development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms	1	100,0
	subparagraph c: Respect for national values and different civilizations	<b>8</b>	<b>3,0</b>
2f-c1	Development of respect for parents	0	0,0
	Development of child's respect towards cultural identity, language and values, national values of its the country of origin	7	87,5
2f-c2			
2f-c3	Development of child's respect towards civilizations other than his own.	1	12,5
	Sub-paragraph d: Taking responsibilities in social life	<b>34</b>	<b>12,9</b>
2f-d1	Spirit of peace	13	38,2
2f-d2	Gender equality	0	0,0
	Tolerance, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin	2	5,9
2f-d3			
2f-d4	Preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society	19	55,9
	Sub-paragraph e: Respecting the environment	<b>11</b>	<b>4,2</b>
2f-e	Development of child's respect towards the environment	11	100,0
	Total	<b>264</b>	<b>100,0</b>

All of these features are in accord with the principles of the convention. Yet, nowhere in the program has the Convention on the Rights of the Child been mentioned. And, there is no warning that children and teachers should know rights of the child and act accordingly.

The program has a sum of 54 goals and 264 acquisitions about Psychomotor (5), Socio-emotional (15), Language (8), Cognitive (21) areas and self care skills (5). The research has sought for the parallels between these 264 acquisitions with the 29th article of the convention.

#### Findings about the Elements in the Subparagraphs of 29th Article of the Convention

As seen in Table 4, 210 of 264 (79,5%) acquisitions discussed in the program are related to "the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential". This proves the program to be a developmental program. Still, it is seen that the problem does not sufficiently refer to the other subparagraphs of the article.

Only one acquisition deals with the *development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; respect for national values and different cultures* is

*seen in 3%, respect for natural environment is seen 4,2%, taking responsibilities in social life*, on the other hand is seen in 12,9%. 55,9% of the acquisitions about the *responsibilities in social life* are related to *taking responsibilities within the society*. *Gender equality* is never emphasized, and *the spirit of friendship among all people* is coincided only in two activities. 87,5% of the coded acquisitions within the scope of *respect for national values and different civilizations* are about developing respect towards his/her own country.

The conclusion of Table 4 shows that the program is not sufficient in strengthening the capacities of children so as to make them benefit from all their rights and spreading the culture of human rights.

#### Findings on the Appearance of Categories of the Rights of the Children on the Sections of the Program

The rights of the child appear 611 times in the program. As also seen in Table 5, most encountered areas in the program are rights to development (239; 39%) and rights to participation (235; 38%) these areas are followed by rights to life (121; 20%). Rights to protection, on the other hand is seldomly encountered (16; 3%).

**Table 5.***Frequency of appearance of the rights of the child in MONE Preschool Education Program for 32-72 months old (2006)*

Categories	Sections of the Program							Total	
	Introducing the Program	List of goals and acquisitions	Explanations about goals and acquisitions	Explanations about educational activities	Organization of educational environment	Evaluation	Daily plan and activity samples	f	%
<b>Category 1: Rights to life</b>	6	34	8	14	8	1	50	<b>121</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Category 2: Rights to development</b>	45	31	21	15	8	21	98	<b>239</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Category 3: Rights to protection</b>	5	5	3	0	1	1	1	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Category4: Rights to participation</b>	19	48	7	14	5	7	135	<b>235</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>100</b>

Sub categories of every right category are explored in the table below. Sections of the program have been dealt with separately for the interpretation of the findings. Total frequencies and values are evaluated via % values. As also indicated in the part, Analyses of the Data coding has been started from the first section of the program and repeating elements have been eliminated in order to avoid fallacy. Thus it would not be appropriate to explore each category of rights separately.

#### **Findings on the Appearance of Sub Categories of the Right to Live on the Sections of the Program**

It is seen that 49% of the rights within the scope of Right to Life is of "Rest, leisure and participate cultural and recreational activities"; 45% is of "Accessing medical services and protection of health"; 5% is of "Responsibility of the State Parties to take measures for the rights to be implemented and protected"; While 1% is of "Rights of family and caregivers to have appropriate living standards and their responsibility to take care of the child". "The child's right to not to be separated from parents", and "right to benefit from social security" are never mentioned (Table 6).

The program emphasizes, "Right to rest, leisure and participate cultural activities and spare times" most mainly because of participation to cultural and artistic activities. The literature talks about the creative process of art is an ideal way for the children to express their emotions, ideas and values and that art is an important element in human rights education. Although artistic activities have not been used

for education on rights, phrases about art as a way to self-expression and introducing different kinds of art have been coded within the scope of 1f.

The child's right to leisure and play whatever game s/he wants have only been encountered under the title of "spare time activities". In the section, "Explanations about Educational Activities" it is indicated that the teacher should provide children with different materials to choose from in the interest corners and that children should be free from teacher's direction in their spare time activities, choosing the corner and the friend at their will (MONE, 2006a, p. 42). Yet, in the Teacher's Guide Book, in one of the seven daily plans prepared as an example to guide all the teachers in the country, (MONE, 2006b, p. 125) it is seen that under the title of "spare time activities" activity about Turkish language has been made. This example, fallaciously guides teachers to use the time in a different way than its purpose. If we consider the fact that almost all children benefitting from the program are full day preschoolers, it is seen that even the limited time for the right to spare time activities mentioned in 1f. Article 31; have been taken away from the children.

The program indicates that play is an undeniable part of the child's daily life and that the child's decision making in the games that are started by the teacher but directed by the child is of vital importance as it will support creativity of the child (MONE, 2006a, p. 42). Yet, very few of the samples shown in the Teacher's Guide Book exhibit activities directed by the child.

**Table 6.***Frequency of appearance of the "rights to life" in MONE Preschool Education Program for 32-72 months old (2006)*

Categories	Sections of the Program								Total	
		Introducing the Program	List of goals and acquisitions	Explanations about goals and acquisitions	Explanations about educational activities	Organization of educational environment	Evaluation	Daily plan and activity samples	f	%
<b>Category 1: Rights to life</b>		6	34	8	14	8	1	50	121	20
1a. Article 4/6: States Parties obligation of taking measure for the implementation of the rights and protection of rights to life, survive and develop.		1	1		1		3		6	5
1b. Article 9: Right to not be separated from parents unless it is required for the best interest of the child.									0	0
1c. Article 18/27: Responsibilities and right to have appropriate living standards of the parents and caregivers.							1		1	1
1d. Article 24: Right to access medical services and protection of health		2	23	4		5	21		55	45
1e. Article 26: Right to benefit from social security									0	0
1f Article 31: the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities		3	10	4	13	3	1	25	59	49

"Right to access medical services and protection of health" that makes up 45% of the rights to life, is directly related to every institutions functioning in the field of education. Still the phrases coded within the scope of article 24 approaches the issue from the perspective of responsibility of the state for protecting children's health. In the section of Evaluation, the program indicates the importance of record information about the child and the family from the very early days of the school (MONE, 2006a, p. 90). Yet, it is thought that it should be separately emphasized that information concerning health of the child (eg. Allergies) should be gathered. In most of the 53 activities in the Teacher's Guide Book, parental participation has been mentioned, yet none of these activities is about warning parents about the importance of sufficient and balanced diet of the child.

Phrases within the program coded as positive approach to article 24 are generally about developing children's awareness about protecting their health. Furthermore, phrases about the importance of safety of the educational environment and protection of children from accidents within the classroom also have been coded within the same scope. For instance; "Beware of any movements that may be difficult for the child as such movements may cause injuries" (MONE, 2006b, 134), "Before start-

ing to clean the environment, warn the children to avoid touching rusty metals, glass pieces...etc, and pay attention to the issue throughout the activity" (MONE, 2006b, p. 158).

A condition conflicting Article 24 have been encountered in the analysis of the program: In one of the daily plan samples in the Teacher's Guide Book, (MONE, 2006b, p. 120) there is an activity about the importance of consuming fresh food for a healthy life. In this activity, which may be evaluated as useful within the scope of article 24, children are expected to taste and guess the reason of the difference between fresh grapes and grapes that have been watered in the classroom for one week. Consuming a fruit, which lost its hygiene and freshness, may also affect children's health in a negative way. Thus, the activity has been evaluated as improper approach towards the rights. The rest of this activity will be explored in the section about the findings on right to protection.

"Responsibility of the State Parties to take measures for the rights to be implemented and protected" encountered 6 times in the program and none of the phrases mention the condition from the perspective of state's responsibilities about the rights. Still, phrases about every living thing's right to life and that this right shall be protected have been coded

**Table 7.**

Frequency of appearance of the “rights to development” in MONE Preschool Education Program for 32-72 months old (2006)

Categories	Sections of the Program							Total	
		f	%						
<b>Category 2: Rights to development</b>		45	31	21	15	8	21	98	239 39
2a. Article 5: States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and caregivers (Parental guidance and development of child's skills)		4					3	6	13 5
2b Article 7: Protection of the child's rights to be registered immediately after birth, to a name, to acquire a nationality and to know and be cared for by his or her parents.									
2c Article 8: right of the child to preserve his or her identity									
2d. Article 10: family reunification shall be made easy									
2e Article 23: right of the disabled child to special carev		1				1			2 1
2f. Article 28-29: right of the child for quality education		40	31	21	15	7	18	92	224 94

within the scope of this article. For example, in an outdoor activity, (MONE, 2006b, p. 123) the teacher is suggested to create a living thing exploration box, and ask children why each box has holes in it. In the end of the activity that indicates the requirement of the living things to breathe air, children's attention is drawn to the fact that *every living thing has the right to live within its own habitat and animals are left to the areas that they have been taken from*. It will be easier for a child who, at a very early age, learns that even an earthworm should be returned to its own habitat, to respect others' rights. This science activity, which has been planned in order for the children to explore the environment, is found very beneficial as it shows that children can be taught about rights under every condition.

#### Findings on the Appearance of Sub Categories of the Right to Development on the Sections of the Program

Rights to development are the most encountered category within the program (encountered 239 times). As also seen in Table 7, 94% of the phrases

evaluated within the scope of right to development, is about “right to quality education”. “Respect for responsibilities, rights and duties of family and caregivers taking care of children” is the second most encountered by 5% (encountered 13 times), “Right to special care for disabled children” is encountered 2 times which make 1%.

Phrases within the program emphasizing that the program is child-centered, that entertaining and interesting activities should be planned, that children shall be given enough time in between activities, that children should be directed to research, problem solving, creativity, sensibility towards environment, and respectful towards differences, that they should be prepared for social life, and phrases about peace and tolerance [eg. “With the children, take your magnifiers and go an expedition to explore the environment” (MONE, 2006b, p. 224)] have increased the frequency of the right to quality education category. Yet, this does not mean that the program perfectly accords with the contents of 28th and 29th articles.

In the program, the most noteworthy phrase about developing respect in children towards human

rights and fundamental freedoms of the child is the phrase "shows respect towards its own rights as well as rights of others" expressed in the 5th acquisition of the 6th goal titled as *managing relations with others*. Yet, it is not understood what the phrase means by "shows respect towards its own rights". No explanations have been made about this goal and acquisition. As the title of the goal is *managing relations with others* the phrase about the acquisition seems to be about child's own rights. However, it is thought that the intention is to provide children with the awareness of its responsibilities towards others.

As the acquisition, "tells about main features of different cultures" potentially provides children with the respect towards cultures different than his own; it has been coded within the scope of 2f: right to quality education. Still, the explanation about the acquisition, the only emphasized difference is the different languages in different cultures, and it is indicated that listening to different songs in different languages would provide children with the awareness of different languages (MONE, 2006a). It is thought that the activity is not capable of fulfilling the indicated purpose if only the activities indicated in the explanation about acquisitions will be done.

Both acquisitions of the goal "being able to respect differences" (Accepts his own differences. Accepts different dispositions of others.) have been coded within the scope of 2f. Still, respect for differences is a concept to be gained only by meticulous efforts and attention to the subject. This phrase, when interpreted separately, may cause an understanding that children need to respect everything that is different. This, on the other hand may cause children to stay silent before ideas and behaviors that s/he does not approve. A similar condition may be expected from the acquisition of the goal of "ability to show tolerance". The fact that no explanations have been written about these acquisitions may create riskful conditions for the children.

In the activity, about the goal of "Being able to respect differences" in Teacher's Guide Book (MONE, 2006b, p. 170) the children are expected to show the photograph of the child with the most similar skin color to his own, to wear socks suitable for their own skin colors and then to wear socks of a different skin color and tell what would it feel like to have this skin color. If we consider the fact that children of this age group is in the egocentered state of their lives, this activity prepared with the goal of accepting different dispositions of others

would probably cause children to conclude that they have the best dispositions. It is thought that similarities and differences between people are not emphasized in an appropriate way in the activity. The activity creates the risk of othering people with different skin colors.

In an other activity about the same acquisition, (MONE, 2006b, p. 174) children are expected to watch dances and music of different cultures and discuss about our culture and other cultures. These activities without creating the understanding that everyone is the same in some way, but different in other way no matter where s/he lives, and that each individual is unique, may serve to learn about different cultures, but might also cause growth of discriminating emotions towards them.

*Respect for responsibilities, rights and duties of family and caregivers taking care of children (Parental direction of the child and development of the child's abilities)* are one of the least mentioned rights. There are many phrases and activities about family participation in the program. Yet, most of them are not in accordance with the content of article 5. Phrases have been evaluated with respect to the scope of the related literature, and suitable ones have been coded. For instance; "Ask families to create special family songs at home, and sing these at the school" (MONE, 2006b, p. 179), "The teacher is supposed to decide which materials will be used for which purposes throughout the year and share this knowledge with the family." (MONE, 2006a, p. 94).

Nice sample activities that can be done at home with the family are shown in the family participation boxes in the Teacher's Guid Book. Yet, in some of these activities, ["Charge the families with the duty of dumping the trash with the children." (MONE, 2006b, p. 157), "...Charge the families to write down what they share with each other in the family with their children..." (MONE, 2006b, p. 163)]. The word "charge" is used rather than the word "suggest". It is thought that, a phrase like "charge" would misguide teachers to think that they are positioned in a higher place than parents.

*Right to special care for disabled children* is one of the least mentioned (2 times only) rights. In the program Introduction section, it is indicated that in the schools that implement integration training the program can be easily applied with some alterations, but no explanations has been made on how these alterations may be made on following sections. Although there is a section on *Tips about activies*, none of the sample activities exhibit tips on how to adapt the activity to fulfill the needs of

**Table 8.**

Frequency of appearance of the "rights to protection" in MONE Preschool Education Program for 32-72 months old (2006)

Categories	Sections of the Program						Total f	% %
	Introducing the Program	List of goals and acquisitions	Explanations about goals and acquisitions	Explanations about educational activities	Organization of educational environment	Evaluation		
<b>Category 3: Rights to protection</b>	5	5	3	0	1	1	16	3
3a. Article 2: prohibition of discrimination	1						1	6
3b. Article 11: Protection against illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.								
3c. Article 19: Protection against any kind of violence	4	5	3		1	1	14	88
3d. Article 20/21: Protection of children without mother or father and monitoring of the adoption process							1	1
3e. Article 22: Protection of refugee children								
3f. Article 32: Protection against financial exploitation								
3g. Article 33: Protection against drug addiction								
3h. Article 34: Protection against sexual exploitation								
3i. Article 35: Protection against child trafficking								
3j. Article 36: Protection against all other kinds of exploitation								
3k. Article 37: Protection against torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment								
3l. Article 38: Protection against war and armed conflict								
3m. Article 39: Reintroduction of child victims to the society								
3n. Article 40: Approaches of the penal law towards children								

physically, emotionally or mentally disabled children.

The *Child's rights to registration, name, and nationality and to know and be taken care of by his parents* have never been mentioned throughout the program. It is possible to prepare activities on this subject appropriate for different levels of development. Asking what would happen if they hadn't any names, what kinds of problems they would face if they had no surnames, would help them understand the importance of having a name. The example Tuğrul gave in the 2010 seminar on Rights of the Child in the Preschool is striking when the pre-

schoolers are asked "What would have happened if we had not have names?" one of the children responded "Should they then call me 'Şışş'". The response of the child shows that s/he has understood the relation between the right to have a name and being accepted as an individual in the society.

#### Findings on the Appearance of Sub Categories of the Right to Protection on the Sections of the Program

As can be seen in Table 8'de, the right to protection is the least mentioned (16 times) right within the

**Table 9.***Frequency of appearance of the "rights to participation" in MONE Preschool Education Program for 32-72 months old (2006)*

Categories	Sections of the Program							Total	
	Introducing the Program	List of goals and acquisitions	Explanations about goals and acquisitions	Explanations about educational activities	Organization of educational environment	Evaluation	Daily plan and activity samples	f	%
<b>Category 4: Rights to participation</b>	19	48	7	14	5	7	135	235	38
<b>4a. Article 3: Best interest of the child</b>	4						3	7	3
<b>4b. Article 12: Right to freedom of expression about every subject related to itself, and right to be listened to</b>	10	13	2	6	2	3	57	93	40
<b>4c. Article 13: Right to freedom of expression</b>	5	35	3	3	3	4	56	109	46
<b>4d. Article 14: freedom of thought, conscience and religion</b>									
<b>4e. Article 15: the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly</b>									
<b>4f. Article 16: Respect for child's privacy</b>									
<b>4g. Article 17: freedom of accession mass media and other sources of information</b>		2	5			19		26	11

program. 14 of the phrases about the rights to protection mentions "right to protection against every kind of violence", 1 of them mentions "prohibition of discrimination", and 1 of them mentions "right to protection for the children deprived from family care". The program does not mention other sub categories of this category, and this is not a surprise. Still, the frequency of the mentioned 3 sub categories is thought to be insufficient.

Phrases about protecting children against negligence and emotional exploitation are coded within the scope of right to "protection against every kind of violence". Nevertheless, it is known that many young children face different kinds of exploitation. The program does not contain any phrases on protecting children.

The sentence, "the program intends to turn the differences among the children into advantage and supports the enrichment of the educational environment" is recorded as the only phrase about the prohibition of discrimination.

In the aforementioned activity done with fresh and old grapes, children are expected to relate shrunk grapes with the pictures of people whose skin has

lost its moist, to examine pictures of well-cared and uncared skins and to discuss ways to have a healthy skin (MONE, 2006b, p. 120). Children may conclude that people who do not have smooth skin have not cared for themselves. Yet, genetics and some dermatological conditions may also cause a problem. Thus the suggested activity may cause children to develop prejudices and to label people according to some features as well as directing them to preserve their health.

*Protection of the children deprived from family care and monitoring of adoption*, have been coded once, as one of the activity indicates that participation of the children without families should be secured, although the activity is not perfectly in accord with the article (MONE, 2006b, p. 121).

In all, the explanations on the application of the program, and in the sample prepared to be an example for the teacher, children without a mother and a father have been ignored, and all the activities about family participation have been suggested to take place at home with parents. The teacher has not been provided with suggestions to alter these activities to the needs of children without parents.

### **Findings on the Appearance of Sub Categories of the Right to Participate on the Sections of the Program**

As also seen in Table 9, the most encountered rights in the category of right to participation, are the *right to freely express ideas* (109; %46) and *right to express ideas about every subject related to him/herself and to be listened to* (93; %40). These are followed by *Right to Access mass media and other sources of information* (26; %11) and *best interest of the child* (7; %3). Other sub categories are left unmentioned.

Phrases giving the children the opportunity to express themselves, directing them to ask questions, discover, relate and comment are coded within the scope of "right to freedom of expression". For example, "Explains the reasons for his/her decision on the solution of the problem" (MONE, 2006a, p. 33)

In the sample activities, the phrases that support children's freedom to choose and decide increased the frequency of "*right to express ideas about every subject related to him/her and to be listened to*". Still, this does not mean that the program have been organized in accordance to the phrase; "the child's directing the process that the teacher starts" indicated in the "Explanations about educational activities" section. Most of the activities are directed by the teacher and only at a certain point, the child's idea is being asked for (like choosing the color of the material that will be used).

The goal of "expressing him/herself orally" is very important with respect to rights to participate. Acquisitions of the goal have been coded in the scope of 4b and 4c categories. In the section titled "Explanations about Goals and Acquisitions" it is indicated that *poems and rhymes shall be used very frequently as memorized poems may contribute to the vocabulary building and awareness of different literary styles*. If the acquisition is interpreted only as encountered in the explanation part, children will have to memorize and repeat same sentences rather than expressing their ideas and feelings. It is thought that this condition would limit children's right to participate.

17th article of the convention mentions the *importance of mass media*, and indicates that publishing of children's books; information and documents that would support children's development should be motivated. There are 26 phrases in the program that could be evaluated within this scope. For example, "Ask them to read a story with their chil-

dren..." (MONE, 2006b, p. 189), "Listen to sound effects from the CDs by attending the classroom." (MONE, 2006b, p. 178). Nonetheless, no indications have been encountered on the importance of children's books in raising awareness to the rights of the child.

*The best interest of the child*, which is the most important right when a decision concerning the child is being made, is encountered in the phrases concerning "evaluation". The principle of best interest of the child requires identification of any potential affects of the services on the child before the service is presented, and after the service is presented its affects on the child shall be assessed. Thus, phrases emphasizing revision and redesignation of the activities in accordance with its effects on the child have been coded in this respect. The principle of the best interest of the child foresees the inclusion of the children in the policies and programs, yet the program does not mention any such intentions.

*Respect for private life*, is one of the rights that is ignored in the program. In the Evaluation section, teachers should be warned to avoid private information about children to be accessed and used by any individuals who have not been entitled to such a right by the law, these information cannot be used for any purpose conflicting the convention. For example, photographs taken during the classroom activities cannot be published on the Internet without the permission of the family. Furthermore, it is expected from the program to indicate that private lives of the children in the classrooms with suavilance system are being violated too.

The activity, "Ask them to bring the CD that the family listens to most," (MONE, 2006b, p. 185) have been assessed as inappropriate when the respect for the private life is considered. The family does not have to share anything that indicates its private life with the classroom. If the different kinds of music families listen to like hymns, march or arabesque is taken into consideration, such an activity might cause children to be labeled.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

The fundamental principles of the program aiming the development of such abilities as of problem solving, communication, reasoning, decision making, taking and fulfilling responsibility, research making, environmental awareness and creativity, and the program emphasis on play-centered activities, and active participation is in accord with the CRC. Yet, the fact that the CRC is not men-

tioned in the Program Book and Teacher's Guide Book prevents children from being aware of their own rights, and teachers from creating classrooms centered around children's rights. The program only tells teachers that it is good to treat children democratically, while it does not give responsibility to the teachers for displaying an approach in accord with rights, and does not make any warnings about violation of rights. Yet the related literature emphasizes the importance of teacher's behavior in the implementation of the rights.

Rights to life and protection have been encountered less than rights to development and participation in the program. These findings show a parallelism with Özdemir Uluç's (2008) and Karaman Kepenekçi and Aslan's (2011) findings.

In relation to rights to development; the most encountered category in the program is *2f: right to quality education*, while other rights have not been emphasized sufficiently. Furthermore, 80% of the acquisition phrases intend to provide "mental and physical abilities of the child". This approves the program as a developmental program. Yet, the program does not mention other sub paragraphs of the 29th article of the convention. The need for developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has not been sufficiently mentioned. The program bears acquisitions through which the child may develop self-respect and self-confidence as well as respect for others. But no clear phrase have been found that would provide children with the understanding of being a human being and treating the other as a human being, rather, the program makes a pragmatic conclusion like "treat the other in the way you want to be treated" as Kuçuradi (2007) indicates.

With respect to rights to participate; the program does not reflect the real participation as indicated in the General Comment no. 12. Generally, the child is expected to participate in the activities that are structured by the teacher. Some phrases mentioned in the introduction part of the program, (personal differences, children's awareness of their own interests, providing children with different choices in accordance with their interests...etc.) have not been encountered in the daily plan and sample activities. As Karaman Kepenekçi and Aslan (2011) indicate, there are no suggestions about benefitting from children's books in developing sensitivity towards rights of the child. Yet, although its subject is not directly related to learning the rights of the child, behaviors and oral expressions of the characters can be benefitted from in developing an awareness of human rights.

In relation to the rights to life; the program chooses the phrases with the aim of developing the awareness of their own health, and the subject has not been approached from the perspective of State's responsibilities to protect children's health. Teachers have not been warned about the need of children to undergo periodical sanitary control, and the requirement for a hygienic classroom and importance of periodical visits to the family physician has not been mentioned. None of the activities with family participation is informing the families about a sufficient and a balanced diet. Although it is indicated that the program is play-centered, children's right to freely decide how to spend his/her spare times and to play freely is not included in the program in the way it is explained in the General Comment no. 7.

With respect to the rights of protection; the teacher has not been given the tips on what to do when s/he witnesses or suspects children's violation of rights by the school, parents, caregivers, or other individuals or institutions. Yet, Şahin's (2011) research shows that every teacher candidate even on their senior year should develop abilities to be aware of exploitations. Köse's (2009) exploration based research shows that preschool teachers may implement physical and oral violence at times. For this reason, the program should have ornamented with goals to draw teachers' attention to the subject and to strengthen children. As Özdemir Uluç's (2008) research, this research shows that rights to protection are not sufficiently emphasized in the program. This may cause children to be vulnerable to many risks that they may encounter. In every explanation about the implementation of the program, and in the sample activities to guide teachers, children without parents have been ignored, and all of the activities about family participation have been designed as home activities to be done by the mother and the father.

Although very few phrases conflict with the convention, the program in general, does not take the CRC as its fundamental principle and a renovation is needed in order to raise individuals with culture of human rights.

Below suggestions are made according to the conclusions:

- CRC is expected to be known and internalized by every teacher.
- Activity samples about family participation are expected to involve tips on integrating the activities for the children without parents. The words

- “mother” and “father” throughout the program is expected to be changed to “parents/caregivers”.
- Activity samples are expected to include boxes in which teachers are directed to alter the activity according to the needs of disabled children in the classroom.
  - Acquisitions and activity samples about healthy diet in and out of the school are expected to be emphasized.
  - Serious warnings are expected to be made about increasing safety measures in educational environments and protection of the child against any kind of exploitation. Teachers should be informed about where to apply and what to do when s/he witnesses or senses exploitation against children.
  - Every acquisition is expected to have explanations in order to prevent false implementations.
  - Activity samples are expected to be enriched in a way to represent appropriate examples concerning participation. Videos on active participation should be shared by teachers.
  - The new program is expected to take rights of the child as its fundamental principle; children should be provided with the awareness of their own rights; respect for others' rights; and the ability to use their rights within the society.
  - Researchers are expected to design the rights of the children training for preschools, and experiment these programs; to make research on the effects of tablet pcs and other technological devices that schools are motivated to use; to develop programs that would enable children to protect themselves from exploitation; to explore and study classroom activities to understand how rights of the child are implemented in the classroom.
  - School administrations are expected to prepare documents on children's rights policies and make sure all the personnel behaves appropriately.
  - Preschool teachers are expected to assess every activity they plan and see if the activity is riskful for creating prejudice, ideas of discrimination and labeling in the children.

Results of this research are expected to contribute different parts of the society. By the beginning of 2012, Educational Program for Preschools is being revised in Turkey. Consideration of the research

by the commission will provide the new program to be in accord with the rights of the child, and creation of a classroom with awareness of the rights. The research may provide preschool administrations with the possibility to build an educational culture based on rights; teachers with the ability to evaluate every activity they create for the children with respect to discrimination and prejudices, and to create activities to help children understanding their own rights and to create a classroom environment in which every individual respects others' rights. Schools are miniature societies. Awareness and sensibility of the young children in the preschools towards their own rights and rights of the others will contribute to the formation of a human rights culture.

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